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***DOT&PF and AMHS Take Action to Reduce Employee Contact
Telework encouraged and administrative leave allowed when possible***

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) always puts the health and safety of employees first and continues to do so in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many DOT&PF employees are now telecommuting, and the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) has reduced shipboard crew levels at the Ketchikan Shipyard to the minimum necessary to safely care for assets.

In order to maintain operations, DOT&PF is following the Department of Administration's guidance on liberal telecommuting and a significant percentage of employees are working from home so we can maintain at least 6 feet of separation in our offices. For those employees who cannot telework, we are diligently working to ensure social distancing and implementing thorough cleaning protocols; for example, our equipment operators are cleaning their vehicles before and after each use and meetings are held in the equipment bays where employees have room to stand at least 6 feet apart.

To minimize close contact between employees, AMHS reduced the number of crew working in the Ketchikan Shipyard by almost 50%. DOT&PF and AMHS determined that the most responsible thing we could do to protect the health of our crew was to reduce the number of people in the confined shipyard as working conditions make it difficult to follow social distancing recommendations.

AMHS employees leaving the shipyard are instructed to take extra precautions as they travel home; stay at least 6 feet away from others, wash their hands frequently, and when they arrive home we expect them to self-isolate for 14 days. These AMHS employees are being paid administrative leave which does not reduce their personal leave banks.

DOT&PF Commissioner John MacKinnon stated, "The present situation is unprecedented, necessitating close cooperation and collaboration between communities, DOT&PF, our contractors, and labor. Transportation supports our communities, our economy, and our industries—connecting people with essential life, health, commerce, and safety access. While we will carry on with our important work for Alaska during these extraordinary circumstances, we will also continue to follow the guidance of our state and federal agencies. It's worth repeating what many have said, we will get through this challenge – together."